

ENVIRONMENT CABINET MEMBER MEETING

Agenda Item 65

Brighton & Hove City Council

Subject: Highways Winter Gritting Vehicle Procurement
Date of Meeting: 4 November 2010
Report of: Strategic Director, Place
Contact Officer: Name: Christina Liassides Tel: 29-2036
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Key Decision: Yes Forward Plan No: ENVCOMM18918
Wards Affected: All

This report was prepared seeking a decision at the earliest opportunity following final approval of the capital allocation for the procurement of Gritter vehicles on 23 September and further clarification on tender opportunities and timescales. It is necessary to bring this process forward to ensure a new Gritter vehicle fleet is available and prepared before the next Winter.

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from the Environment Cabinet Member to tender for and award contract(s) for the replacement of the winter maintenance fleet for the council's highway winter service in 2011/12.
- 1.2 Following last winter's severe weather events, the council established a Scrutiny Panel and identified additional resources to improve the service and procure newer vehicles more suited to extreme cold weather.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member gives approval for Brighton & Hove City Council to tender for the provision of replacement winter maintenance vehicles for the council's highway winter service in 2011/12.
- 2.2 That following a full tender process, either through EU procurement process or through existing national framework contracts, delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director, Place to award the contract(s).

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 The current winter maintenance fleet is 11 years old and due for replacement. Maintenance costs have been increasingly high and last winter's severe snow events took their toll on the existing vehicles. The current vehicles are also not all appropriate for operating in severe snow and ice on the city's hilly roads. The Council currently owns 7 highway salt spreading vehicles of which only 3 are 4

wheel drive, the others being 2 wheel drive. These existing vehicles are also less efficient at spreading salt than more modern counterparts.

- 3.2 Extensive market research has been conducted over the summer of 2010 to ascertain what is available and what best suits the needs of Brighton and Hove as an urban hilly area with narrow streets. The environmental impacts of the vehicles are also being considered as well as health & safety and practical requirements.
- 3.3 Research has also been conducted into options for salting pavements in addition to the carriageways, by procuring a specialised footway machine (circa £40k) which can be jointly used by the Street Cleansing service and/or procuring towable salt spreaders that could be attached to Cityparks tractors or seafront quad bikes. As with the main highway salting vehicles, environmental issues as well as health & safety and practical requirements are being considered.
- 3.4 The resultant contracts will be for the provision of new highway and footway salting vehicles and equipment to the council's specification. It is envisaged that ongoing future maintenance for any vehicles purchased by the council will be carried out via the corporate contract jointly held with East Sussex County Council.

4. PROPOSALS & BENEFITS:

- 4.1 The proposal is to replace the existing fleet in 2011 with 6 new 4 wheel drive gritters, one specialist all-terrain 4 wheel driver gritter, a specialist pavement gritter and a highway emergency vehicle (4 wheel drive). Additionally, some of the highway vehicles will be fitted with snow ploughs to deal with heavy snow falls as experienced in recent years.
- 4.2 The new winter salting vehicles will substantially reduce the vehicle maintenance costs which will in turn reduce the need to draw down from the contingency fund. Any additional surplus can be re-invested back into repayment of the interest on the capital funds or contract hire costs and service improvements as identified by local and national guidance. For further information on service improvements please see Environment Cabinet Member Highways Winter Service Plan report of 4 November 2010.
- 4.3 The new salt spreading vehicles will utilise up to date technology which will enable a more efficient use of salt and improve the service: for example, better spreading of salt or faster pavement clearance.
- 4.4 The new winter maintenance vehicles will be procured either through the publication of an OJEU Notice or via the use of approved national frameworks for municipal vehicles. As part of the procurement process, the council will evaluate the different options of procuring the new winter maintenance vehicles; including outright purchase, contract hire with maintenance and contract hire without maintenance. This evaluation will be carried out as part of the tender assessments of the tenders submitted from approved suppliers. Contracts will only be awarded to suppliers who can offer the best value to the council.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 There has been extensive consultation on the requirements for the council's highway winter service. The council's Environment & Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny produced a set of recommendations following a public scrutiny session. Working with the Civil Contingencies Officer, highway officers have held several planning meetings and maintain ongoing communication with members of the Sussex Resilience Forum. This includes category 1 Responders (fire, police, NHS, ambulance service), the bus service, schools service and other important city services/premises.
- 5.2 The procurement process will be undertaken in conjunction with the council's procurement and finance teams.

6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 6.1 Capital: The sum of £0.920 million has already been provided for in the capital programme to replace the winter maintenance vehicles. As part of the market research carried out, benchmark prices have been obtained for the procurement of these new vehicles and it is anticipated that the vehicles can be obtained within the current approved budget.
- 6.2 Revenue: Any capital expenditure will be funded through unsupported borrowings paid for out of the winter maintenance revenue budget. If the decision is taken to hire the vehicles those costs will need to be met from the existing revenue budget. As part of the budget setting process for 2010/11 there was a £0.100m additional annual investment in winter maintenance. During the financial years of 2008/09 and 2009/10, the council spent £58,600 and £96,000 respectively on vehicle maintenance for the salting vehicles.

Finance Officer Consulted: Karen Brookshaw Date: 18/10/10

Legal Implications:

- 6.3 The value of the proposed contract for the procurement of vehicles exceeds the relevant threshold for the purposes of the EU Procurement Directive and accompanying UK Regulations. As a result, any such contract is subject to the full application of both the Directive and Regulations and the tender process will need to be undertaken in compliance with the relevant legislation. Contracts over £75,000 must be prepared in a form approved by the Head of Law.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert Date: 12/10/10

Equalities Implications:

- 6.4 The contract(s) will seek to maximise the council's winter service by providing improved vehicles and equipment that is fit for purpose in extreme snow conditions. This enables accessibility throughout the city.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.5 The provision of a new winter maintenance vehicles will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the service. Sustainability issues will be addressed in the pre-qualification and specification documents. The successful contractor(s) will be sourcing products to compliance with the EU regulations for vehicle emissions (currently Euro V) which will reduce CO2 emissions. The new vehicles will also be more fuel efficient, and therefore reduce the amount of fuel used. Additionally, salt spreading will be more efficient and will reduce the amount of salt used by the council. Overall, a more efficient vehicle fleet will reduce the council's carbon impact.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 6.6 There are no direct implications in respect of the prevention of crime and disorder within this report although the vehicle specifications developed will try to minimise vandalism through design and the use of relevant materials.

Risk & Opportunity Management Implications:

- 6.7 New winter maintenance vehicles will better enable the council to meet the requirements of the winter service.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 6.8 The winter service provides safe passage on the public highway as far as is reasonably practical and new vehicles will play an important part in the council meeting its duty.

7. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 7.1 One alternative is not to procure any new vehicles but the old vehicles are outdated and costly to maintain. Their usable lifespan will be exceeded within another 2-3 years.
- 7.2 As part of the procurement process, the council will evaluate the different options of procuring the new winter maintenance vehicles; including outright purchase, contract hire with maintenance and contract hire without maintenance. This evaluation will be carried out as part of the tender assessments of the tenders submitted from approved suppliers. Contracts will be awarded to suppliers who can offer the best value to the council.

8. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 Brighton & Hove City Council will achieve significant service benefit from procuring new winter maintenance vehicles

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

None

Documents in Members' Rooms:

None

Background Documents:

1. Environment & Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Report
2. Environment Cabinet Member Highways Winter Service Plan report of 4 November 2010.
3. Capital Programme 2001/11.

